



June 5, 2015

KANSAS BULLETIN NO. KS300-15-28

SUBJECT: LTP—Environmental Quality Incentives Program—Fiscal Year 2015 Ogallala Aquifer Initiative

Action required by: June 19, 2015 (Field Offices [FOs])

Action required by: July 24, 2015 (Area Offices [AOs])

Action required by: August 7, 2015 (State Office [SO])

Purpose: Provide guidance for administering the fiscal year (FY) 2015 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Ogallala Aquifer Initiative (OAI)

Expiration Date: September 30, 2016

Background

The OAI is designed through EQIP to provide producers with financial and technical assistance to reduce the quantity of water removed from the aquifer and to improve water quality using conservation practices on cropland, pasture, and rangeland.

Eligible Land Uses, Resource Concerns, and Conservation Practices (CPs)

The eligible land uses, resource concerns, and CPs are available in Attachment 1.

Only irrigated land that meets the requirement of having been irrigated a minimum of two of the last five years is eligible for the OAI. All land not meeting this requirement, including non-irrigated land, is ineligible.

Contracts developed under OAI must include at least one of the applicable core CPs, or must be completing a conservation system that supports core CPs that are documented as already applied on the land under contract.

Priority Areas

The priority areas for the OAI were created by combining the Groundwater Management Districts' (GMD) Quick Response Areas and the Kansas Water Office (KWO) priority 1 declining groundwater areas as seen in Attachment 3.

Only applications that have a point of diversion within the priority areas will be considered eligible for this initiative. All other applications outside of the OAI priority area will be considered ineligible for this initiative.

(more)

DIST: A, F, S, Tryban, A. Miller

Natural Resources Conservation Service
760 South Broadway Boulevard
Salina, Kansas 67401-4604

Phone: 785-823-4500
FAX: 855-355-5070
www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov

Screening Criteria

No screening criteria is used to support this initiative.

Additional Requirements

All applications must achieve an annual water savings of 10 percent from the benchmarked water use by the end of the contract.

ProTracts Ranking Tool

ProTracts fund code for this EQIP initiative is “Kansas OAI Proposal.” A copy of the state and local ranking questions are provided in Attachment 2.

National ranking questions are consistent for all EQIP applications. Refer to Bulletin [KS300-15-14](#) for additional guidance on answering national questions.

OAI does not offer Conservation Activity Plans (CAPs), therefore any ranking question referring to the use of a CAP shall be answered “NO” so no additional ranking points are awarded.

All eligible applications shall be entered into the Conservation Programs Geographic Information System Interface (CPGI). All answers available on the CPGI report will be used to answer the corresponding question on the ProTracts Application Evaluation and Ranking Tool (AERT). The application identification number in CPGI will match the application identification number from ProTracts.

Deadlines

Although applications for EQIP are accepted continuously, the FY2015 application evaluation period cutoff date for OAI applications is set for **June 19, 2015**. All applications received by this date are to be entered in ProTracts on June 24, 2015.

Field Offices (FOs) will have conservation plans and application rankings completed on July 10, 2015.

Area Offices (AOs) will complete peer reviews of rankings by July 24, 2015.

The State Office (SO) Programs Staff will make funding decisions by August 7, 2015.

FOs will have all approved applications and documentation entered in document management system (DMS) for second level review by August 21, 2015.

Assistant state conservationists for field operations (ASTC-FO) will ensure that all contracts have been obligated in ProTracts by September 7, 2015.

NOTE: If an applicant makes a decision to change to their fund code from EQIP-Water Quantity to ‘Kansas OAI Proposal’ they are committing to the OAI fund. OAI applicants may not transfer their applicants back to the ‘Water Quantity’ ranking pool.

NOTE: Recent policy changes has ended the requirement for Regional Conservationist (RC) approval for EQIP contracts greater than \$150,000. However, applications over \$150,000 will be submitted to the SO prior to obligation for quality assurance review.

These should be submitted in the Document Management System (DMS) no later than **August 21, 2015**, under the correspondence folder. Attachment 5 of bulletin KS300-15-35 should be submitted included in the information packet submitted to the AO.

Contact: Please forward questions through established channels to Xiomara Tryban, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, at (785) 823-4569 or email xiomara.tryban@ks.usda.gov.

(signed)

ERIC B. BANKS
State Conservationist

Attachments